

Wycombe Wanderers 1, Oxford City 0

FOR the umpteenth time this season, Wycombe Wanderers created an abundance of chances but still had to be satisfied with just the one goal. On Boxing Day against Oxford City it proved enough for two Isthmian League points but they could have made life so much easier for themselves and a more realistic score line would have been 5-0.

From the second minute, when Keith Jameson hit the post, it was all one way traffic. The Blues amassed no less than 17 corners compared with City's solitary one but in the end it took an own goal from centre-half Walton to give Wanderers their first home League victory since October 21.

It was the same old story. Every home forward had at least two chances but the ball simply would not go into the net. The approach work was again excellent, the passing accurate but the finishing poor.

Against Oxford, Wycombe were so much in command it didn't really matter, but against stronger sides it can mean the difference between victory and defeat as Wanderers found out to their cost against Cheshunt in the Amateur Cup.

CONSTANT DANGER

There were several encouraging aspects of the game, however. Paul Birdseye, playing only his second match since resigning from Maidenhead, put in an excellent display. His overlapping caused constant danger to the City defence while his defensive game was always sound.

Another player to shine was Keith Jameson, whose work rate was excellent. At the back Rob Williams again stood out, although the defence was never really tested.

The game was only two minutes old when Wanderers won their first corner. The ball was cleared out as far as Jameson, who sent in a speculative shot from the edge of the area which left goalkeeper Harris helpless, but the ball struck the foot of the post before being put behind for another flag kick.

Tony Horseman and Tony

Amos both went close, the latter with a lob that just cleared the Oxford cross bar as Wanderers won five corners in the first 15 minutes. In the 16th minute Mick Holifield was only inches away from putting the Blues ahead but Trevor Stokes raced across to slide the ball off the line.

Then in the 19th minute Wanderers produced one of their best moves of the match. Larry Pritchard pushed the ball back to Birdseye who flighted a perfect ball to Horseman inside the Oxford area. "Bodger" brought the ball down beautifully and sent in a strong drive on the turn, but straight at Harris.

Oxford could not match Wycombe's flair in attack and hopefully pumped long balls down the middle for Marcham and Beasley to chase. But the action was all at the other end with Amos drawing the 'keeper and then blazing the ball high over the top.

There were three other good opportunities to take the lead before the interval but after 45 minutes the scoresheet was still blank.

A superb one handed save by Harris started the second period, the 'keeper diving full length to push away a crashing shot from Holifield. Former Wycombe player Bobby Marcham put in one of Oxford's rare shots with a 30 yarder in the 54th minute but his effort went narrowly wide.

MIDFIELD CONTROL

Throughout the match, Wycombe had about 90 per cent of the possession but could make little use of it in terms of goals. With Pritchard, Jameson and Hutchinson controlling midfield with ease the Blues mounted attack on attack. In

the 61st minute it seemed that Horseman must score when he produced an amazing run that left four defenders beaten. But Tony took too long in shooting and Oxford were able to cover. Then in the 69th minute Wanderers received their reward with that elusive goal. Ian Rundle's long cross-field pass was headed on by Amos.

Johnny Hutchinson gathered the ball outside the penalty area and ran to an acute angle before firing in a hard drive. Harris could only parry the ball and it struck Walton before going into the net.

Alan Gane replaced Jameson in the 76th minute and 60 seconds later only a swooping save from Harris prevented a second goal, the 'keeper cutting out Hutchinson's curving cross. Centre-half Walton was unlucky to be booked for a foul on Pritchard in the 84th minute.

City substitute Smith came on for Woodley soon afterwards but by this time Wanderers were bombarding the visitor's goal. Harris saved from Hutchinson again and Holifield had the ball in the net only to be ruled offside.

Just after Wycombe had secured their 17th corner Tony Amos missed one of the best chances of the game. Running through a tired Oxford defence, he drew Harris but aimed his shot straight at the 'keeper who gathered at the second attempt.

S.E.

WYCOMBE: K. O'Brien, I. Rundle, P. Birdseye, R. Williams, G. Olson, K. Jameson (sub A. Gane 76th min.), L. Pritchard, J. Hutchinson, A. Amos, A. Horseman, M. Holifield.

OXFORD: P. Harris, N. Hartigan, A. Inseal, T. Stokes, D. Walton, E. Metcalfe, A. Silto, A. Sinnott, J. Woodley (sub J. Smith 85th min.), J. Beasley, R. Marcham.

Referee: D. V. Reeves.

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